



February 12, 2014 Meeting

3:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

Meeting Summary

1. Introductions

David Montgomery, Chair (Needham) called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Members and guests attending the meeting introduced themselves. (For attendance see page 5)

2. Chair's Report—*David Montgomery, Chair*

The MPO met on January 9 and 23 and approved several UPWP work programs, including an MBTA-funded fare increase work scope and the Freight Program work scope. MAPC staff made a presentation on the development of demographic data to be used in the Long Range Transportation Plan update. On the 23rd, there were presentations on Title VI and a sub-regional roadway study. Prior to the meeting on the 23rd, the UPWP Work Program Committee met to review administrative details and receive updates on the FFY 2015 UPWP Development Process. Following the MPO meeting, the Congestion Management Committee met to discuss congestion management performance measures.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes - *David Montgomery, Chair*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 13 and December 11, 2013, meetings. Both sets of meeting minutes were approved.

4. Roadmap to a Sustainable Transportation System, – *Stephanie Pollack, Dukakis Center of urban and Regional Policy, Northeastern University*

Dr. Pollack discussed the recent work underway at the Dukakis Center. She explained that they have been working with Greater Boston Sustainable Communities Consortium to develop a set of regional transportation indicators and a website for accessing them. The Center also worked on a rating system for transit oriented development station areas and a survey of transportation needs in four low-income communities (East Boston, Lynn, Worcester and Springfield). The Center is conducting a best-practice study on how to measure and track transportation equity and social equity as it relates to walkability.

Four Major Themes for Transportation Planning and Investment

Dr. Pollack reported that the Center has identified the following four major themes as the focus of its work:

Sustainability
Equity
Accessibility

Transit (station areas and core transit riders)

Transportation and Sustainability. The state faces a major challenge in meeting the greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals of the State Global Warming Solutions Act.

- Transportation is the largest contributor to GHG emissions in the state accounting for a third of GHG emissions.
- Transportation is the fastest growing emission source while other major sources are decreasing.

Between now and 2050, transportation investments will have to be realigned to achieve sustainability goals.

Transportation and Equity Goals. Equity connotes an ideal state in which everyone has full and equitable access to opportunities and amenities, regardless of their race ethnicity, gender, age or wealth. In transportation, the focus has been on the process side of equity, making sure meetings are held in the right place, that material preparation is available to all participants and the right people are brought into the conversation. Normative/substantive equity is both the actual addressing of transportation needs and the advancing equity and fairness.

Our transportation system does not work equally well for everyone; it works best for car owners. In Boston, African-Americans commuting (by car, bus and subway) experience higher mean travel times than white commuters. In 2011, black bus riders on average spent 70 more hours commuting than white bus riders. The commute of black bus riders compared to white car drivers takes nearly 165 hours more per year based on American Community Survey data.

Over one-third of all survey respondents report having sacrificed a 'basic necessity' in order to pay transportation expenses, including maintenance or transit fare. Accessibility findings show that that limited hours and geographic reach of public transit systems (especially Regional Transit Authorities) can restrict access to employment and other opportunities.

Transportation and Accessibility. Dr. Pollack stressed that transportation planners need to shift their thinking from mobility to accessibility. Mobility is about moving vehicles, but accessibility considers things like proximity to food and shopping stores, healthcare and jobs. The need is not the travel; the need is the thing or place you access with the travel. Typically, congestion is perceived as a major impediment to mobility and its mitigation includes an array of programs that focus on congestion relief. There are good alternative ways to increase access.

Connectivity is a key component to accessibility. This addresses all the parts of the system, not just connecting arterials roads to freeways. To enhance a network, planners must consider how to leverage existing components of the system with strategic additions that can be made with relatively small investment in order to connect places to where people want to go.

Transit Station Areas and Core Riders. The Dukakis Center projects that the MBTA needs to plan to handle 100,000 to 367,000 extra daily riders by 2020. The system is growing because local residential areas and workplaces are growing.

The Center considered two primary portions of the Boston MPO. The core area is located within a half a mile of the MBTA system, accounts for about 5 percent of the land region and represents thirty percent of all households in the region. The residential density of this MBTA transit shed is 10 times the residential density of the non-core area. The core region is where much of the rental housing is located and 42% of the population regularly takes public transportation, bicycles or walks. The region is home to 21% of workers, 27% of the public transit riders and 28% of the zero-vehicle households in the Boston MPO.

There is a need to plan differently for the core and non-core regions. The core users of the transit system are disproportionately immigrants, people of color (irrespective of income), zero-vehicle households (irrespective of income), renters, low and lower middle income households. Transit oriented development should consider the make-up of the people who will use the system.

Toward sustainability and equity: Potential directions for a “roadmap”

Dr. Pollack presented ten strategies and ideas for improving the transportation system.

- ***Reduce statewide VMT.***
- ***Pick the right performance metrics.***
- ***Focus less on traffic congestion.***
- ***Focus more on transit congestion/capacity.***
- ***Invest in the region’s core.***
- ***Measure “location efficiency” in time, not distance.***
- ***Use metrics to drive investment choices.***
- ***Invest in the transit fleet.***

- ***Invest in “better buses”.***
- ***Promote walkability, a key to accessibility.***

DISCUSSION

During the discussion, Dr. Pollack made the following statements:

- It is always useful to bring community interests and voices into the decision making process. Local advocates are a strong and effective way of building support for improved transportation investment and they could be involved in proactive problem-solving to help solve some of the operational challenges of transit agencies, such as roadway signing and maintenance, curb-cuts, and snow removal
- Transit system advocates need to look for new approaches to meeting their transit needs.

- Advocates should support the gas tax amendment and ask that performance measures guide how the newly authorized funds are spent.

5. Committee Reports and Upcoming Activities – David Montgomery, Chair – Freight Committee - Walter Bonin, Chair

The committee discussed this year's initiatives including rekindling connections with MassDOT and becoming informed concerning some of their new activities. The committee hopes to meet again soon to discuss ways of emphasizing freight concerns to the MPO. D. Montgomery encouraged the continued involvement of the committee and suggested that those members attending the committee meeting today be considered members of it. He also encouraged members to become involved in the other Advisory Council committees

TIP/UPWP Committee - The work of this committee will emphasize the preparation of the Advisory Council's comments regarding the two documents. These comments will be prepared as the document development and review process is underway.

LRTP Committee - The work of this committee will pick up after the spring. Like the TIP/UPWP Committee, review and discussion of the Long Range Transportation Plan and presentation of comments will be undertaken during the development of that document.

6. Old Business:

The MPO responded to the Advisory Council's comment letter sent in June, 2013, on the FFYs 2014-17 TIP and the FFY 2014 UPWP. The letter is available on the Advisory Council page of the MPO's website or by contacting MPO staff.

D. Montgomery explained that the MPO Chair values the inputs of the Advisory Council. The presentation of Advisory Council views at the MPO meetings is an effective way of getting the many different views and interest of the Advisory Council across, in addition to the formal comment letter. The Advisory Council Chair brings items to the MPO members as part of a regular agenda item at the beginning of the MPO meetings.

Members expressed the view that presenting Advisory Council issues and ideas to the MPO at the meetings has an impact. D. Montgomery stated that the Advisory Council has a voice in the process.

One member felt the Advisory Council should be more proactive and that committees be involved earlier in the review process. Another member emphasized the need for the Advisory Council to be concise and to the point.

7. Announcements:

J. Businger announced that the December National Corridors Initiative Conference was well-attended.

M. Gowing announced that Acton received a Challenge Innovation Grant for Transportation. The grant is designed to use Council on Aging vans across towns for the purpose of increasing mobility. A public-private partnership grant is being pursued for increased job access within the RTA.

8. Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded at 4:30 PM. The motion passed, unanimously.

ATTENDANCE

Agencies (* MPO & other non-voting)

MassDOT
MassDOT
MassDOT - Aeronautics Division*
MAGIC*
TRIC*

Agencies (Voting)

Executive Office of Elder Affairs
MassRides
Seaport Advisory Council

Municipalities (Voting) *MPO Member

Acton
Arlington*
Boston*
Brookline
Cambridge
Lexington*
Marlborough
Millis
Natick
Needham
Newton*
Wellesley
Weymouth

Citizen Groups

AACT
Association for Public Transportation
Boston Society of Architects
Boston Society of Civil Engineers
Massachusetts Bus Association
MassBike
Mass Motor Association
MassCommute
National Corridors Initiative
Riverside Neighborhood Association
WalkBoston

Guests

Ed Lowney, Malden resident

Attendee

Sree Allen
Keith Sutton
Steve Rawding
Franny Osman
Steve Olanoff

Emmett Schmarsow
Catherine Paquette
Louis Elisa

Mike Gowing
Laura Wiener
Tom Kadzis
Dan Martin
Jeff Rosenblum
Richard Canale
Walter Bonin
Dom D'Eramo
Michael Gallerani
David Montgomery
David Koses
Frank DeMasi
Owen MacDonald

Mary Ann Murray
Barry M. Steinberg
Schuyler Larrabee
Topher Smith
Chris Anzuoni
Chris Porter
Representative
David Kucharsky
John Businger
Marilyn Wellons
John McQueen

Linda Shepard Salzer - Ways 2 Go
Allan B. Montenko, Office on Disability
Cleo Stoughton, Cambridge
Theodora Fisher, HST
Rebeca Noyes, MBTA
Eric Kanes, MBTA
Peter Faulk, MBTA
Allison Pultinas, Friends of Melnea Cass Blvd.
Dan Murphy, C D M Smith
Audria Downs, City of Newton
Olivia Hallaway
Peter Furthen, Northeastern University
David Watson, MassBike
Reed Cochran - Door 2 Door
Stephanie Pollack, Dukakis Center-Northeastern
University
Allan Kara-Allen, AACT Member

MPO Staff

David Fargen
Beth Isler
Matt Archer

Sean Pfalzer
Maureen Kelly
Anne McGahan